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ENFORCEMENT LEADERS, AND
VIOLENCE SURVIVORS PREVENTING
CRIME AND VIOLENCE*

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Testimony to the House Committee on Education

By K.P. Pelleran, State Director, FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS MICHIGAN

May 10, 2006

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is K.P. Pelleran and I am the State Director of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan. Today I am seeking your support for HCR 35, sponsored by Rep. Pearce. It is a resolution to request that the Department of Community Health, the Department of History, Arts & Libraries, and the Department of Labor and Economic Growth be added as co-chairs to the "Michigan After-School Partnership", a statewide network aimed at ensuring access to after-school programs for every school-age child in Michigan. The Partnership is currently co-chaired by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education, based on amendments sponsored by Rep. Jerry Kooiman and Sen. Ron Jelinek in budget boilerplate in FY 2004-05 and FY 2005-06.

We know that even with all the progress made over the last several years, thousands of Michigan children are left unsupervised after school. Current studies indicate that when children are left alone in the after school hours, they are more likely to use alcohol and smoke cigarettes, more likely to have lower academic test scores, and more likely to have higher absentee rates from school. Data from all over Michigan also shows that the incidence of juvenile crime increases in the hours immediately after the school day ends.

After-school programs have emerged as an answer in communities that have established supervised activities for their children after-school. Quality after-school programs can transform out of school time into hours of academic achievement, wholesome fun, and community service. Children who attend such programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, grades, and conduct in school compared to their peers who are not in after-school programs.

As you know, after-school programs are funded and coordinated by a variety of community groups, faith-organizations, child care centers, municipalities, school districts, and state and federal governments. With the recent growth and expansion of after-school programming, it is time for Michigan to examine the coordination of these efforts and to ensure that children are receiving the quality programming that they need. The Michigan After-School Partnership is already:

- Working to implement the recommendations of the Michigan After-School Initiative that was passed by the House of Representatives in 2003.
- Involving key stakeholders statewide in the network from diverse groups of parents, schools, business, elected officials, law enforcement, the faith-based community, and public and private providers.
- Developing a plan for Michigan that creates better coordination between after-school programs around the state, better outcomes for children, and accessible funding for programs.

The resolution opens the Partnership to include the other agencies that have an interest in after-school activities through workforce development, obesity prevention, and the use of our community libraries. They have significant support from educators, child advocates, and law enforcement organizations throughout Michigan, as well as the various state departments.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids is a non-profit anti-crime organization led by chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and crime survivors who know that the most powerful weapons in our arsenal to fight crime are the proven programs that help kids get the right start in life – programs like high quality after-school programs, early childhood school readiness, abuse and neglect prevention and getting troubled kids back on track. The Michigan After-School Partnership is a project that we have been promoting for the past four years.

We encourage your support for HCR 35. Thank you for your consideration.